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# Fisheries Operations Management Initiative



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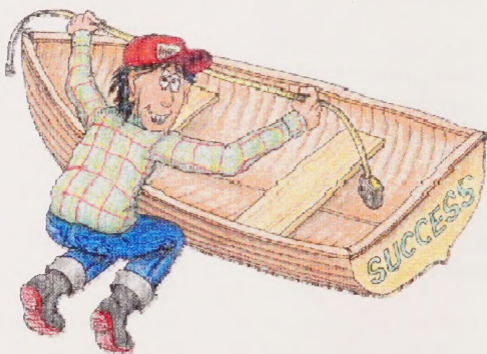
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## INTRODUCTION

On February 26, 2004, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced funding of \$7 million for two new initiatives designed to further assist First Nations affected by the Supreme Court of Canada's 1999 *Marshall* decision.

The first initiative, the *At-Sea Mentoring Initiative*, is designed to help eligible First Nations' fishers further develop fish harvesting skills through the use of on-board fisheries mentors. Participating First Nations have developed training plans to determine who will receive at-sea mentoring. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) will contribute a total of \$6 million -- until March 31, 2008 -- in a graduated cost-sharing arrangement with participating First Nations communities.

The second initiative, the *Fisheries Operations Management Initiative* (FOMI) has funding of \$1 million ending March 31, 2008. It is designed to support First Nations in their efforts to strengthen fisheries management practices.



## HOW CAN FOMI HELP MARSHALL-IMPACTED FIRST NATIONS?

Many First Nations communities do not have all the tools and structures in place to determine such issues as sharing revenue from communal licenses or formal rules on how vessels are to be repaired, maintained and, eventually, replaced.

A number of First Nations agree that it is important to have arms-length arrangements for managing the fishery, and a separation between the commercial fishery business and the political decision-making processes of the Band Council.

The Fisheries Operations Management Initiative (FOMI) can assist First Nations by providing financial assistance to engage private sector expertise to help them address these internal issues.

### **FOMI IS DESIGNED IN RESPONSE TO FIRST NATIONS' IDEAS**

A workshop entitled "Building Strategic Alliances in the Fisheries Sector" was held by the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs (APC) in Dartmouth on February 9 and 10, 2005.

Over 135 participants representing many of the 34 *Marshall*-impacted communities participated. Tribal organizations and federal agencies also attended.

The aim of the workshop was to pursue the following objectives:

- Develop and implement a First Nations management regime to improve self-rule of First Nations level resources in Fisheries;
- Develop key First Nation human resources capacity to improve First Nations operational plans and business management practices in the fishery; and
- Establish a strategic partnership approach to improve targeted employment opportunities of First Nations people in the fishery.

The APC workshop reported on what First Nation participants said, including these findings:

- Training is needed on the business side of operating fisheries.
- There needs to be a much clearer separation between leadership and business administration.
- The need to develop long-term strategic plans regarding the fishery at both the regional and community levels.

The Fisheries Operations Management Initiative (FOMI) is designed in a way that allows First Nations to achieve their stated management goals with maximum possible flexibility.

Participation in FOMI is strictly voluntary and has the aim of promoting the development and implementation of a management regime to improve self-rule of First Nations-level fisheries resources.

## FOMI OBJECTIVES

- To strengthen community-level fisheries management structures within *Marshall*-affected First Nations.
- The establishment of institutions, policies and plans to maximize and sustain benefits resulting from fisheries assets acquired by First Nations under the *Marshall* Response Initiative.

A "Nation-building" approach can improve the chances of success for sustainable economic development in First Nations communities. Well-managed fisheries assets would become the foundation of a brighter economic future in these communities.



## **PROGRAM DESIGN**

### **Phase 1 – Community Consultation**

- A "Series of Options" discussion document can help identify key questions that should be addressed by First Nation communities, such as:
  - Role of Band Councils, community members, fishers;
  - Band's designation policy for communal licences;
  - Revenue generation and sharing;
  - Vessels/ gear ownership and maintenance;
  - Business/ corporate models for the operation of the fishery;
  - Accountability, transparency and regular reporting of information to community members.
- FOMI will finance private sector expertise to facilitate community dialogue on these key questions.
- Community-driven consensus, if achieved, will position the community to pursue a more detailed and advanced consultation under Phase II.

### **Phase II – Development of a Comprehensive Fisheries Management Framework**

- First Nations that achieve consensus on broad questions and principles may then wish to develop a comprehensive fisheries management framework for their community.
- Phase II will require outside expertise to facilitate the process of turning a "vision" into a draft management framework.
- FOMI will provide financial resources to communities wishing to pursue development of a comprehensive fisheries management framework for their community.

## Phase III – Implementation Assistance

First Nations that complete a comprehensive fisheries management framework may require resources for implementation.

Outside expertise may be required initially until First Nation management capacity can be acquired through training.

DFO will work in partnership with First Nations, the private sector and other government departments to secure operational and training funding to allow for the successful implementation of a comprehensive fisheries management framework.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Eligible First Nation communities interested in participating in the Fisheries Operations Management Initiative (FOMI) may contact one of the following DFO representatives for additional program information:

#### HEADQUARTERS

##### **Kevin Fram**

Aboriginal Policy and Governance  
Director, Special Projects  
(613) 993-3096  
[framk@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:framk@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

#### QUEBEC REGION

##### **Daniel Gagnon**

Aboriginal Fisheries, Director  
(418) 648-5883  
[gagnond@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:gagnond@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

#### MARITIMES REGION

##### **Kathi Stewart**

Aboriginal Fisheries, Director  
(902) 426-4011  
[stewartk@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:stewartk@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

#### GULF REGION

##### **Bernard Thériault**

Acting Director of Aboriginal Fisheries  
(506) 851-3336  
[theriaultb@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:theriaultb@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)